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My Life

by

Paula Juli Cohen

It is not easy for me to start writing at this time in my life. I should have done this many years ago.

It was my son, Herb, who inspired and urged me to do this. I hope this will mean something to my children and grandchildren.

Paula Juli Cohen

New York

March 24, 1994

I was born in Radom, Poland, on October 8th, 1921. My family was made up of my father, Hershel, my mother, Tzarna, my older sister, Sara, my younger sister, Chejwa, and the youngest of us, Priva. We were happy four girls.

I do not remember much of my life before school. I lived in a loving home with great respect for my parents. My father was a very religious man who prayed twice a day in the synagogue. Although he was a religious man, he was not a fanatic. My mother, a homemaker, kept a kosher home. She was a very educated woman. She attended high school during the Russian occupation of Poland, and could speak Russian, German and Polish fluently. As a little girl, I remember seeing two red books in our closet with gold lettering spelling out the word Nagroda, which means a gift for scholastic achievements.

I had a very happy time in school. My friends were Shirley Cygielman Zaidman, Sally Freilich Horn and Rachela Borenstein, who was taken to Treblinka during the war. We were always together. We studied together, went to the movies together, and also spoke about boys our age.

I had many aunts and uncles since my father had six brothers and one sister. My mother had only one sister, Perla. She and her husband, Itzchak, were my favorite aunt and uncle. Their children were Moshe, Rachela, Abram, Menashe, Mordechai and Henia, the youngest.

My father was the only bread winner. he worked in our house with five other men, making the upper part of shoes, and then delivering them to the factory. Our apartment consisted of a large kitchen and one bedroom. Half of the kitchen was the workplace; the other half, the living quarters. Although there were no delicacies in our house, we never were hungry. My mother baked cookies and little cakes for Shabbat. I never felt deprived of anything because we simply knew that we could not afford "fancy" fruit like bananas, oranges and even grapes. Likewise, we seldom had candy and chocolate because they were too expensive. My mother would have loved to work to bring in some extra money, but in those days there was no work for women like my mother in Radom. She helped our neighbors with letter- writing or filling out applications. She did this for free; no money was exchanged.

Later, when my mother had more time because we were all in school, she started teaching girls to read and write Yiddish. She got

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paid very little for this, but it gave her great satisfaction. I could have learned it at the same time, but I was not interested.

I can hear my mother's words today, "You will regret this someday!" How true! She was right, I do!

My parents went through many tragedies in their lives. My mother gave birth to ten children. My three sisters and I were the last ones. They buried six children who died in infancy from diseases like scarlet fever and whooping cough.

Every Friday evening when my mother lit the Shabbat candles, she would cry and tell us how old her other children would have been.

My father, being a religious man, asked the Rabbi for help. Why are our children dying? The Rabbi ordered my parents to move to a different apartment. Our new apartment was on Rwana #5. I must have been five or six years old then. It is the only home I remember.

My father continued to go to the Rabbi every Saturday. He was thankful to G-d that his surviving girls were healthy.

I loved Friday evening and Saturday in our house. On Friday we had dinner together by the light of the five candles lit by me mother. We all sang with my father at the end of the meal. This was repeated

Saturday after services at about 12-1 in the afternoon. When we sat down for the main meal, all the food had been cooked and prepared on Friday because there was no cooking on Shabbat. A small fire was lit in the stove so the food was kept warm. Other times, we sent cholent to the local bakery on Friday and brought it back on Saturday. This traditional Shabbat meal consisted of meat and potatoes put in a heavy pot covered with paper and tied with string. Each family's name was on their pot so they would not get mixed up in the bakery oven.

Rosh Hashana was another holiday that meant a lot to us girls. My father was a very important person in the synagogue. Throughout the summer before the holiday my father practiced blowing the shofar. On Rosh Hashana many women and even the people who rarely attended services went to the synagogue to hear the blowing of the shofar. My sisters and I were always happy and very proud of our father, but at the same time we were a little nervous, hoping that the sound of the shofar would be clear. It always was. Our neighbors would say nice things about our parents to us. We were so pleased. At dinner we would enjoy the good food my mother prepared for the

holiday and talk about the service. We could barely wait for the second day to do it all over again. Those were very happy times.

My parents never took a vacation. The holidays were vacation for them, especially Passover. My father did not work for eight days. This was a great time for us girls because our house was clean and our kitchen was a *real* kitchen, with no one working in it. We had a beautiful apartment, not a factory.

I did not know my paternal grandparents because they died when I was very young. My maternal grandparents, grandma Rivka and Grandpa Aaron, were wonderful people. We loved them. They owned a small house on the outskirts of Rodom. It was a long walk from our house, but it didn't matter to me. It was always fun going there. There was a vegetable garden and a beautiful orchard of apple and pear trees and many other fruits. I loved to spend summers at my grandparents' house. My older sister, Sara, did not like it that much, and my younger sisters were too young to go. My friend Shirley had an aunt who lived near my grandparents' house, so she stayed with her aunt. This made my summers joyful. We were together again. My Grandma Rivka carried fruit and vegetables to our house even if it was difficult for her. I

was not aware of how hard she worked, at the time, because I was too busy with my friends and my own life.

In 1937 my grandmother suddenly had a stroke. Half of her body was paralyzed. She could not tend to herself. We brought her to our house and all of us helped in every way we could. My mother slept with grandma. There were no other accommodations. One year later my grandmother died. This was the first time in my life I observed a death so close to my heart. It had a very profound impact on my life. Shortly thereafter, my grandfather died.

During the last year of public school, my class started a correspondence- with a class in Krakow, and six months later we went on a trip there. This trip was an unforgettable experience for me. I still remember it as if it happened yesterday. i often speak about it with my friends, Shirley and Sally. we got to see the beautiful city of Krakow and the salt mines in Wieliczka. How sad that later, during the war, that place became the concentration camp, Plashow, where many people died. Public school was coming to an end with great sadness. I knew that I could not continue school since the high school in Poland was not free. We simply could not afford to pay for school.

My sister was studying to be a dressmaker and my mother encouraged me to do the same. I did not like this idea. I wanted to be a salesperson instead, however I was not old enough and there were not many shops on the main street in Radom in which I could work.

I had a bad experience trying to become a salesgirl. I started working in a very elegant shoe store. For the first year I was to learn selling without being paid. I agreed to do that. One day, the boss's wife, who had just given birth to a new baby, told me to take care of her child. I did not want to be a nursemaid and so I did not get the job.

I decided to tutor young children who needed help with their work. Soon after I started, I had enough work to keep me busy the entire day, five days a week. This is how I earned my first money. It was not much, but I loved it. For the first time, I could buy my own clothes. With my sister being a dressmaker, things became much easier for our parents. they only had to buy clothes for my two younger sisters.

My sister had a boyfriend named Abram. They were very much in love. My girlfriends and I would go to the movies, but if we went with boys, it was only in groups. . . Never alone. We used to get together in my friend Shirley's apartment to sing and dance to the music of

Marlene Deitrich on the Victrola. Shirley had a very large apartment. It was a happy time for us.

Rumors, newspapers, talk about Germans, Hitler's politics. . . All that went by our ears. We never paid much attention to that. I was too busy with my life.

At the end of August 1939, things changed and were never to be the same again. There was such chaos. We truly did not believe what was coming. The Polish government mobilized only days before Germany invaded. We were completely unprepared for war.

Complete fear and panic overtook the Jewish people. All the young men were running at night to escape from the Germans. My sister's boyfriend, Abram, came to say good bye. Some of the men who worked for my father told us to run away as well and asked me to go with them. the rumors were that the Germans would kill us all soon as they entered the city.

My parents, my sisters and I took whatever we could carry, closed the door, and left our house. we did not know where we were going. We were running for our lives.

We had just walked a few blocks when my father said "Stop!" He grabbed us all and said, "It looks like we can't go too far, so what difference does it make where the Germans will get us, whether on the road or in our house?" We returned to await our fate.

The next morning our city was being bombed. There were human casualties and buildings being destroyed. There was no place to hide. We were so frightened that we prayed that the bombs would stop and that we would not be hit. I remember saying, "Let them come, as long as they stop the bombing." The bombing lasted a few days and there was absolutely no resistance from the Poles.

On September 1st, 1939, the Germans entered Radom. the first few days were very quiet. we were afraid to leave the apartment. we saw soldiers everywhere. After a few days of peace, we heard that the Germans had already shot innocent Jews. They just went from house to house with a list of names, took the people out, and shot them on the spot. We did not know why!

The first announcement made by the Germans was that all Jews had to wear a white armband with a blue Star of David on it in order to

make us easy to identify. Failure to wear the armband resulted in death. We all obeyed. Even my little sisters had to wear them.

It was so frightening to see the SS unit soldiers. We Jews had to step off the sidewalk for every German. We were afraid to even look at them. Schools were closed for all Jewish children. All Jewish-owned businesses were confiscated. All Jewish-owned factories were taken over by the Germans. Food rations were so small that no one could survive on them. As a result, a black-market in food grew. People risked their lives to bring food in for the Jews. This food was so expensive that only the rich were able to buy it. A City Council, the Judenrat, was established by order of the Germans in order to enforce the rules pertaining to all the Jews. The City Council was responsible for providing people with work every day and they established a Jewish police force to act as an arm of the German Authority.

My father stayed home all this time, too afraid to go out. The Germans cut the beards of orthodox Jewish men like my father solely for their own amusement. Some of them even took pictures as they performed this humiliating act! My sister, Sara, cried day and night.

My sister, Sara, cried day and night. She thought that Abram was killed running away to the Russian zone, since we didn't hear anything from him for a long time. Then some of the men who had run away to the Russian zone started coming back home. Life was not very good for them there, and they thought it would be better under German rule. When Abram came home my family was extremely happy. The families decided that the children should get married. If they had to run, they would do so together.

The wedding was very small- no music in the house. The main rabbi of Radom, Rabbi Kestenberg, officiated. I was so happy for my sister, Sara, because the young couple was very much in love. My parents married off their first daughter!

Abram wanted to go back to the Russian occupied part of Poland with Sara. He left to check things out there and returned to tell us that there were new rules made by the Russians. All people who ran from the Germans had to go into Russia, rather than Polish territory. They were not happy with this ruling and decided to stay in Radom instead.

My sister moved in with Abram's family because they had a large apartment. Sara was very happy for a while. She worked serving Polish

women and was paid sometimes with money and sometimes with food. Food was the most important thing because it was necessary to survive the day.

The black-market was in full swing. Bread was available to those who could pay (those who had a lot of money). The price of bread rose everyday. For us, buying bread on the black market was impossible. We had to survive on the ration of bread that we got.

I started teaching children who could no longer attend school. I went from house to house, teaching, not for money, but for food. That is how we lived. Some people gave me flour, some gave me some meat they had gotten on the black-market. I did not accept money because you couldn't buy much for the money they paid. I got home just in time for the eight p.m. curfew.

Everything was smuggled into our quarters. The smugglers risked their lives. The dealers had to be very careful not to be caught by the police because if caught, they were shot on the spot. Soap was a very important thing for all of us. My younger sister Chejwa carried some soap from one house to another for the dealers and that is how we got soap for the family.

We were allowed to go to a bakery where we would stand in line from the early morning until they opened, in order to buy a loaf of bread. My mother and I used to go since my younger sisters could not. We each went to different bakeries to make sure that one of us would come home with bread. That did not happen too often. When the bakery finally opened, your position in line no longer mattered. There was chaos; pushing and screaming. Whoever was strongest got a loaf of bread. Many times the Jewish police could not control the crowds of hungry people. Many times we came home with no bread.

My mother began selling objects of value to the Poles. Tablecloths, linen clothes, jewelry and our silver candelabra were precious to us. My mother had a beautiful gold watch and a long gold chain that she wore only on the high holidays to synagogue. We used to love to see our mother dressed in nice clothes and jewelry. She sold most of her gold rings for food.

My father was always at home. Sometimes when the police were looking for men to work, we hid him in the closet. Men were put to work at the most humiliating jobs, such as having to sweep the streets with a tiny toothbrush. If they were carrying large pieces of furniture

down stairs under the watchful eyes of sadistic Germans, they often came home bleeding and were unable to return to work the next day.

In spite of all that misery, my parents, my sister and I were thankful to be together. There were so many broken families. There were men who never returned from work, and people killed for hardly any reason.

One day I came home from work and my mother was very happy. She greeted me with the news that Sara was pregnant. She said how wonderful it was to have a grandchild. I was stunned by the news. I said, "A baby now! At this terrible time!?" My mother called me a name and got very angry with me.

We had no news at all about the war so we did not know how the war was going. There were always rumors that the war would end soon. There were also rumors about a ghetto. I did not know what that meant. We were soon to find out that the Germans had plans for us.

The rumors about the ghetto became a reality. The Jewish section of the city was to be separated by a wall and cut off completely from the rest of the city. All the Jews were to move into this part of the city.

The City Council was in charge of placing the people in different apartments. It was terribly crowded. Two or three families lived in one apartment. Our apartment was going to be part of the ghetto and we were ready to take in other families. At the last minute this order was changed, and so our part of the city was going to be outside the ghetto.

This was a terrible blow to us because all places were taken up. Everyone was relocated and there was no room for us. We were given a tiny front room in a two room apartment. The people in the next room had to go through our room since there was only one entrance. That would not have been so bad if the room had not been so very small.

There was no place for me to sleep since two beds, a sewing machine, a closet and a table took up most of the space. My parents slept with each of my sisters and I was forced to sleep on the table. We were a family of five. In the next room was a family of three.

I still met my friends at times in Shirley's house. I spent many nights sleeping over at her house. Some of our friends worked for the Germans as tailors or doing other kinds of work and so they had special passes to leave the ghetto. No one without a pass was allowed

special passes to leave the ghetto. No one without a pass was allowed to leave the ghetto. We sometimes envied our friends because they were able to smuggle some food back into the ghetto for their families.

My sister, Sara, gave birth to a little boy. They named him Aaron after my grandfather. We were happy for them, but times were so uncertain. The hunger and over-crowded conditions were terrible. My sister Sara remained in her apartment. She and her husband did not relocate since their street belonged in the ghetto.

When the Radomer Ghetto was formed, Jews from the small surrounding villages and very small towns were pushed into the ghetto. They were placed in our two large synagogues without any food or water. The Jewish Council did what they could. They could not feed that many hungry people. I remember clearly seeing small children in the street begging for food and so many children with swollen bellies, no longer asking for food. They were dying in the street and no one could help. . . Only a miracle could.

The father of my friend, Sally, was Jonkel Freilich. He was a hard-working person who loved his family. He was a socialist. All of Sally's friends liked him very much. When the occupation started, Mr. Freilich

heard that the Germans would be arresting all people belonging to the socialist organization of which he was a member. For many months he didn't sleep at home out of the fear that the Germans would be looking for him. One day, lonely and wanting to see his family, he went home. That is when the Gestapo came for him. His family never heard from him again.

Sally was the only one in her family to survive the war. She later went to Auschwitz to look for information about her father. From Radom he had been sent to Auschwitz where he later died.

The Jewish police was trying to keep order. At the entrances of the ghetto were Jewish and Polish police, who stood at guard under the watchful eyes of the Germans. The only people who left the ghetto in the morning were the young men and women who worked for the Germans, and they were the only ones who returned in the evening.

Because of hunger, overcrowding and lack of sanitary conditions, an epidemic of the highly contagious disease, Typhus, broke out. The Germans had a special hospital selected for the ill. Every day we had to report who was sick. We found out that as soon as the hospital was full, the German killed all the sick people in it. When

we learned of this, we stopped reporting the sick. The Jewish police was supposed to do the reporting. We disliked the police, but their lives too were in jeopardy.

In addition to this, every so often a special unit of the Germans, S.D. (Security Police) came into the ghetto at night to carry out their orders. One night, we heard shooting all around us and we thought that surely we were next. I remember watching from a window, seeing a group of Germans in the next street. I did not know what would happen. The shooting stopped and I saw the Jewish Commando, who were in charge of collecting dead bodies. I saw wagons of dead innocent people. I do not know how the beasts selected their victims. I really thought that night that they were coming to our house next.

Those pictures have remained in my memory all my life. During sleepless nights, I see so many things that happened not so long ago. How can you ever forget something like that?

I also think of how my family died.

During the march to the train? Gas chambers? How horribly? How painfully? It is heartbreaking for me to visualize it. Sometimes people ask me, " How many times will you be liberated? How many

meeting will you go to? How many documentaries will you watch? How many books can you need to be published?" Perhaps I feel guilty that I am the only one of my family alive. I am always thinking about how I can prevent things from happening again. Sometimes I am frightened for my children and grandchildren.

When I hear about anti-Semitism I fear terribly. After the war I was almost sure that the world would be beautiful and that the people would have learned from the many who died and suffered pain because of the war. I thought that now we would have a better world. . . How naive.

A few days after the shooting we discovered that my younger sister Chejva was getting sick. She was burning up with a very high fever. these were the signs of typhus. She was very ill. We took care of her, at the same time covering up her illness. We didn't tell anyone that she had typhus out of the fear that she, like other typhus victims, would be shot. After two hard weeks, Chejva recovered without any medication. During her illness, my mother slept with Chejva. No one caught typhus from her.

It is hard to remember how we even survived the hunger. My mother always had hot water on the stove with hardly any potatoes or grain. Somehow we still felt good because we were in it together. I brought home some food for all of us.

Everyone tried to work for the Germans to be "safe". In the summer of 1942 an announcement had been posted in the ghetto, asking for volunteer men and women between the ages of 16 and 40 to work in the ammunition factory in Radom. What could be more ironic than to work for the Germans, manufacturing ammunition which would later be used to kill us?

My father volunteered to work in a factory making all sorts of leather goods for the Germans. For the time we felt secure because only my mother, who was over 40, and my sisters, who were not yet 16, were not working. The rumors stated that when one or two people in a family worked for the Germans, the rest of the family was safe.

I worked an eight hour shift during the day and an eight hour shift at night. I met my friend Millie at the factory. She was also a volunteer. Mania, nicknamed Millie, was living with her father, Joe Drezner, aunt Gitla, and uncle Israel. We became very friendly though Millie was

younger than I. She was and still is a beautiful person, both inside and out. She is now Millie Drezner-Werber.

The Jewish Police marched us out of the ghetto in the morning and brought us back to the ghetto at night. We had a piece of bread and a soup every day. I managed to save the bread and took it home every day. My father didn't receive any food on the job. He had to bring his own sewing machine to his workplace. His job was in the ghetto.

One day while we were working, a German civilian came into our shop and said, "All Jews cannot go home to sleep anymore." We had to remain at the factory from then on. They were therefore allowing us to go home and get some clothes. This was a terrible blow to me. I could no longer bring my family food, nor could I even see them. The family was separated.

I went home and took some clothes. I promised I would be back. I did not have to say good-bye. The Jewish Police somehow managed to take us back to the ghetto several times. Those visits were full of love and tears. It was heartbreaking not to know whether we would ever see each other again. My father still worked in the same place. They all looked very thin and sad.

The Jewish Police at the factory with us could go to the ghetto at certain times. They used to bring food to the people of the ghetto with them. One day I was given a letter that my mother had written to me and had given to a policeman. It was a letter full of hope and promises for a better tomorrow. She was trying to make me feel good. She said not to worry because the war could not go on forever. She said that she had already lived through a war. we would all certainly survive and be together again. . .

I did return to see my family one more time. We were all so happy to be reunited, even if only for a short time. My mother took a gold ring out from somewhere. I couldn't believe that she still had anything of value. she told me she had been saving it in order to give it to me at the proper time. "I think this is the time," she said. "Hold onto it and think of us. You will be the only one who will survive."

I said, "Don't say that," and covered my ears. I didn't want to hear it. We hugged and kissed for the last time. My poor little sisters. How they clung to me! I never saw them again.

Some time in July 1942 my mother and father, my sisters, Chejva, Priva and Sara, Sara's husband Abram, their one-year-old son Aaron,

my aunts and uncles and cousins, were all taken away. I will never know how they died. I can only imagine that in their frail condition, my mother, father sisters and nephew probably never even made it to the trains in this mass deportation. There was shooting and pushing everywhere. If they somehow made it to the trains, they were gassed and burned in Treblinka like all the others. How I can sit here and write about it all is really very hard to understand.

My only possessions were the ring and letter my mother gave me. I kept the ring pinned to a glove I kept with me at all time. I knew the letter by heart. I read it very often.

One day after having finished a night shift, sleeping on the concrete floor, we heard a German walk in and say, "We know that you all have valuables, jewelry and money. You must surrender it all into this hat. If we find that you have kept anything from us, you will be shot immediately." I took the ring and gave it away.

How can I ever forget things like that? With a broken heart, I held onto the letter from my mother. It was already falling apart.

We continued working in the factory, where we slept in the floor. Sanitary conditions were deplorable. When things were going

normally, so to speak, something always happened. A young boy working on our floor broke a small metal part in the machine at which he worked. It was a minor thing but he was accused of sabotage. The Germans took him out into the field and made us all watch as they shot him like a dog.

I clearly remember the German officer who ordered the shooting. His name was Reich. He walked away smoking a cigarette. This innocent boy was shot only to instill fear in the workers. We were completely cut off from any news. We were sure we would never live to see the end of the war.

My friend, Rozka Borenstein and her cousin, Cutka, stayed together. Rozka's husband, Sam, was in the barracks with the men. Rozka and Sam decided to leave the ammunition factory work and return to the ghetto because living conditions there were much better. They could be with their family in the ghetto. They arrived just in time for the second deportation from the ghetto. Since they were not employed by the Germans, they were taken away with all the others. I always think that perhaps if they had stayed at the factory they would

have survived. I also think that perhaps if my sister, Sara, hadn't had a baby we'd have been together and both of us would have survived.

My cousin Helen and my friend Shirley remained in this small ghetto. From time to time we were granted permission to return to the ghetto to see relatives. The task of granting permission was left to the Jewish Police. They took us to the ghetto and were responsible for our return. I visited the ghetto twice. I stayed with Helen and tried to comfort her in her new tragedy. During a raid in her workplace, her husband and father-in-law were taken away by the Germans. She didn't know where they had been taken, but they were never seen again.

The second time I went to the ghetto, I met Sara's brother-in-law, Chaskel. I didn't even know that he was still alive. He took me into his house, where my sister had lived before the deportation. He said to me, "I do not know how I will live here." He didn't work, and it was very dangerous not to have a place of work. I took some clothes from my sister's house and traded them with Poles who worked with us for food. During the final liquidation on January 13th, Chaskel was taken away, never to return.

We heard new rumors and they were never good. We heard that the small ghetto was going to be liquidated completely. There was nothing we could do about it. Before the liquidation, some people were allowed to go to another ammunition factory in Pionki. Helen, her mother-in-law, her sister-in-law, and Shirley went there. On January 13, 1942, another deportation took place. Some people went to another factory. The rest went to the trains to Treblinka. We ammunition factory workers were the only Jews left in Radom.

The ammunition factory was made up of different departments under the watchful eyes of the Germans. One of the Germans, called Miller, selected only pretty young girls to work in his department. One of them was Cutka Borenstein. Miller was a pervert. Every so often he had the Jewish Police bring some of the girls to his office one at a time where he would beat them and abuse them for his pleasure. Every time they were called, they had no place to hide. One of the girls, Esterka, ran away three times. The police always brought her back. The last time she ran into the ghetto just before a deportation and was sent to Treblinka.

Ala Lega, another girl who worked in Miller's department, survived the war and became mentally ill. She spent many years in a mental hospital and died at the age of forty. The Radomer buried her at our cemetery and put up a monument for her.

I am just lucky that he never picked me. I stood next to the very girls he picked. Maybe he was looking for someone younger and prettier. Maybe I was just lucky.

By now there were no more Jews in Radom.

In the summer of 1943 our camp was taken over by a group of military Germans. It officially became a concentration camp. Until then we had some of our clothes from home, but with the arrival of the military things changed for the worse. We were ordered to bring all our belongings out into the courtyard and all our possessions were confiscated. We were each given one dress with blue and white stripes (prisoner garb). On the back of each dress the letters K-L were painted in red. The men got trousers, jackets and caps. In the winter we were very cold, but that didn't change anything.

We had no news about the progress of the war. Slowly we lost hope of ever seeing the end and being free again. We always heard

rumors that the Germans who ran our camp had already liquidated the camps and ghettos in Lublin, which was not far from Radom.

During that time, two people escaped from the camp. To avenge that, the Germans killed five people from the same family. We had to watch every time they were senselessly shooting our people. There were so many incidents that they are all too numerous to mention.

One day, the S.D. came to the factory. Seeing them was always a sign that something was going to happen. They called up all the Jewish Police by name and told them to take some of their belongings with them. They Germans led them to believe that they were going to work somewhere. One of the policemen, Gershon Engel, was a very good friend of mine. As he was saying good-bye to me, he said, "We are going to our deaths." He was right. We never heard from them again. . . Thirteen young, strong, innocent people gone forever.

In the spring and early summer we heard that Germany was losing the war. We were very happy thinking that freedom was not far away for us. Not so. While the Russians were coming closer to Poland, the Germans decided to liquidate our camp.

In July an order came saying that we were to leave the camp and Radom. Where to? Nobody told us. We marched out with hardly anything. It didn't matter. We really didn't need anything. We walked through the streets of Radom with the Germans on each side of us. We marched in a column of eight women and men together. How humiliating for me to walk like a prisoner! The heat was unbearable and there was no water.

Sometimes people stood near the sidewalk offering us water but the Germans did not allow us to take it. Those who couldn't keep up with the pace stayed in the back. The Germans had a plan for that too. They announced that the tired people who couldn't walk would be provided with a horse and buggy so that they could ride. Those who did that were shot. In the evening, as we slept in the fields, we looked for them. They had been dead for a long time.

We walked three days and slept three nights. On the fourth day we arrived in a city called Tomashow. We were separated from the men and placed in a jail. For a moment we were so happy not to have to walk anymore, but we didn't realize what was waiting for us here. The room was only large enough for 200 people, but there was 500 of us.

There was no food or water, we waited until the morning to hear something and to get some food. In the meantime we were scratching ourselves. It seems that in this room were very large lice who started eating us. We were trapped, scratching and pulling the skin off our bodies. We had to endure this in this place for three days and nights.

Ultimately, we were taken to Auschwitz. Many of us were taken to have our heads shaved, but I was among those whose heads they didn't shave. They pushed us into a large room. Suddenly we heard a loud scream. A young mother had tried to smuggle her little girl in between her legs. The Germans noticed her and pulled her out with the baby. Being in this large room with the closed door we were very quiet, looking to the ceiling for the gas to come. Water came down instead. The surprise almost made us faint. We were astonished. We were not finished off! What would come next?

We were each given a dress which was more like a rag and a pair of wooden shoes. Size didn't matter; tall people got short dresses and short people got long dresses. The same went for the shoes. I was later to find out what wearing wooden shoes without stockings or

socks meant. It was torture. The shoes made sores all over our feet. No one could complain about the pain. That meant death.

We arrived in our field. We were greeted by the Loger Fuhren, who was a Jewish prisoner from Slovakia. She was the head of our field who had about fifty barracks with one hundred or more in each barrack. This woman was just as great a beast as the Germans. She ~~grated~~ us with terrible foul language. She called for our leader, who was ~~Mandj~~ Cyna. She stepped forward. When the beast looked at her and didn't like her shaved head, she appointed someone else to be our leader. The beast then explained the rules of the camp.

No one could escape from here. Electrified barbed wire surrounded us and in a tall watch tower stood a German with a rifle. The front entrance had a sign saying "Arbeit Macht Frei". Work makes you free. Inside were wooden bunk beds in which we slept ten women to a bed, top and bottom. The first night we were so tired that we didn't even notice the large chimneys of the crematoria. We discovered them in the morning. The smoke poured out day and night and the stench of human flesh was terrible. Every day we saw trains full of people leaving empty. We were just waiting for it to be our turn next.

Our day began with a roll call, five in a row, that lasted for hours. When the weather got cold this roll call was terrible. The cold October and November winds of Poland were severe. Every one of us wanted to be in the middle of the lines to get some protection from the wind and so there was always pushing and shoving. The strongest always won. After the roll call we were given a small piece of black bread. There was no work for us. We felt like small worms as we were milling around and waiting.

In Auschwitz nothing grew. There were no trees, no grass and not even a single leaf. Just concrete and wires. Sometimes they called us to work carrying large rocks from one end of the camp to another. We'd then repeat the same thing the next day.

They also told us we had to be clean. Once a week the water barrack was open for us for a certain time. We all wanted to wash. There was pushing and shoving and calling names to get in until finally the doors were closed and only the stronger managed to get in. At one point the water was shut off and it was all over. We had no toilet paper. How does one do it? We ripped some material from our dress or rag and ~~sew~~^{sewed} it and washed it whenever we could.

The worst thing was when the loudspeaker announced a Block Shpera, which meant we all had to go to the barrack. Within a minute we were all inside and the door was closed. That meant another selection. We had to stand erect in front of our beds. The Germans walked slowly into the barracks, looking at us. We were petrified. We knew what that meant. When they pointed at those who were thin and sickly, they said they were going to the hospital. From there to the crematoria. When I look back at this I am amazed at how these most terrible fears came true. We wanted so much to live. We looked at each other thinking of what would happen at the next selection. My cousin Rema was so frail. I stood in front of her to protect her.

One day Rema and I had an idea of how to get some bread. We slowly walked through to the kitchen even though it was forbidden. Maybe we would find something. We found a very large turnip and rushed back to the barrack where we offered to exchange a large piece of turnip for a small piece of bread. We had customers and since we sold the turnip, we decided to do it again. It was risky but we were always hungry.

As we were approaching the kitchen, we heard the alarm to get back to the barracks. It was quite a distance and so we were running for our lives. We heard the German trucks on our field. We made it to the door and started pounding on it to have it opened. we were so lucky. Someone opened the door for us and we were saved. We never tried that again.

Watery soup was distributed daily and the Germans asked for volunteers to carry the very large kettle from the kitchen to the field. we were not allowed to have any dishes or spoons. After eating we had to return the dish which was given to us. Some of the women hid dishes and when the soup was being carried to our field, they ran to the kettle, opened the cover and grabbed some soup. They then ran away as far as they could and ate it. There was terrible screaming among us not to do this. It didn't help. Hungry people are like animals. The Lqger Fuhren heard about this and punished the women severely. They had to kneel on large rocks holding rocks in each hand for days with no food or water. They didn't live much longer after that.

We heard that a transport from Pionki from another ammunition factory arrived at our field. I knew that my friend Shirley and cousin

Henia were working there. I ran to see them and started asking for them. I was so happy to hear that Shirley was there. We fell into each other's arms, so happy to be alive. Shirley told me that Henia did not go to Auschwitz. I was happy for her. I left promising to meet again. The next day they were ordered out to Auschwitz, which was good. Anywhere but Auschwitz. I was so pessimistic. No news. no hope. I really thought that I would never get out of here.

Sometimes during the night we heard planes. How we hoped that they would just bomb us! It would have been better than this fearful waiting!

Next came an order that we had to line up to be tattooed. Everyone was tattooed and given a number on the arm. My number is 24497A. It meant nothing to me. This was my name now. Some of my friends felt good about the tattoos. They said that the tattoos were a sign that we were going to work, otherwise why would they give us those numbers?

A few weeks later we heard rumors that German civilians were going to come to Auschwitz and take some of us who had worked in the ammunition factory in Radom to work in factories in Germany. The

next day we were told that they needed only one hundred women from our group. we numbered five hundred. Choosing the one hundred women was a nightmare. How cruel! They selected us once and then they mixed us up again five times. Each time my cousin Rena and I held on to each other tightly so as not to be separated. At the end, I remained alone. Rena did not make it. I cried. I was so alone again.

We left the field to be washed and to be given some clothes. We then left Auschwitz. What a good feeling. We did not know what kind of work we would be given or where the work would be. We were never told anything. But for the first time, I thought that maybe I would live all because we left that forsaken place, Auschwitz. We arrived in a small village called Oberalstad in Czechoslovakia. It was in a valley surrounded by mountains. It was December 1944. There was lots of snow and it was very cold. In this valley were four newly built barracks in which we were housed. There was a watch tower and a guard above us. I was alone again. My cousin Rena remained in Auschwitz. Someone noticed my loneliness. It was Lonia Aizenberg. She was also alone. She told me that if we stayed together, it would be better for both of us. I was very pleased with this friendship. Lonia was a little older

and wiser than I was. We became very good friends and were later liberated together.

When I met Lonia, she had a husband named Baruch and a six year old son named Shlomo. Shlomo and Baruch remained with the men on the train when we had been removed to march to Auschwitz. I later learned from my husband, who had been among those men, that while we were marching, the men had been assembled on the platform. At this point, Shlomo was torn from the arms of Lonia's husband.

The factory in which we worked was ten kilometers away from the barracks. Every day we were marched to the barracks by German women in army uniform. They watched our every move. We even had to ask permission to go to the bathroom. The factory, Siemens, produced small parts from airplanes. This factory still exists in Germany today. We were divided into groups. The foreman was a Czech. We received a small piece of bread and a watery soup without salt. We worked eight hours a day during one week, and eight hours at night during the next. The most important thing to remember while working at the factory was not to break a part. Breaking a part by mistake was considered an act of sabotage by the Germans.

The living conditions were better than at Auschwitz, but the hunger was greater. During our march to work one day, we passed a truck carrying potatoes. Some of the potatoes had fallen out of the truck and we grabbed them as though they were diamonds. As we did this, the watch women screamed at us and chased us from the potatoes. They told us that we would be punished for this severely. We ate the raw potatoes, but we didn't escape punishment.

The punishment came the next Sunday. The head of our camp, the Commandant, looked and acted like an animal. First he wanted to know who had grabbed the potatoes. Since we didn't confess, everyone had to suffer. For hours we had to stand in the deep snow doing all sorts of exercises to humiliate us. After this we were exhausted but our hunger had grown greater than our fear of punishment.

The next time something else happened. Some good women offered us some food during our march to the factory. We were not allowed to take and were punished once again for that. Once, during our night shift, our foreman, who was an elderly Czech, left us his lunch out of pity. We were very thin. We had no strength.

During our time working there I learned that Lonia had a fifty dollar bill in her shoe that she had somehow managed to save. She wanted to bribe the kitchen staff with it in the hopes that they would give us more food. Though the both of us wanted food more than anything else, I persuaded Lonia not to go through with her plan. I knew that if we gave them the fifty dollars, they would either keep it and turn us over to the Germans or they would think that we had more hidden away and would withhold food in the hopes of extorting it from us.

In the meantime we heard a rumor that someone had tried to kill Hitler and failed. Our luck.

Spring was coming and the weather was getting better. We waited. Something was going on, but we didn't know what. We now feared that the Commandant of our camp would kill us so that he could run away if he had to. He had repeatedly told us that in the end he would kill us all.

The next day we were told that we were not allowed to go to work. What next? There was chaos among the Germans who watched us. we waited, huddled together in one barrack. The nights were so bad that

we were afraid to go to sleep. In the morning we noticed that the Germans in the watch tower were gone. An eerie feeling fell over us. We should have been happy but the opposite was true. We felt alone and so we stayed in our barracks, afraid to go out. Then some of our girls ran up to the gate. They returned, telling us that they could see clouds of dust in the distance. we all ran to the road. From far off we could see soldiers in uniforms that were not German. We stood frozen to the ground, waiting for the soldiers to come closer and closer. It was the Russian army liberating our camp. It was a moment that I cannot even describe. I was going to be free once again. I couldn't believe it.

I had given up hope so many times. I am free. Maybe I will find someone from my family. Maybe. No longer a prisoner. I am able to live a normal life again. Maybe someone in my family is alive. I shall look for them. No more obeying orders. No more looking at the Germans' murderous faces. Oh how wonderful! Lots of food. No hunger. I am going to be a normal person again. But I am so alone. I am like a bird out of a cage with no place to go . . . but glad to be alive.

The Russians stopped at our barracks. They told us that the war was over. There was no need to be afraid anymore. They told us that they would feed us and protect us. we had food, but were otherwise so alone. . . but free. The local Czechs brought us food. The partisans came out of hiding in the surrounding woods. We celebrated our freedom together. It was a time of great happiness, but at the same time it was very sad and lonely. I didn't know where I would be going now that I was free. All this time, we in the camp were cooking and eating to get our strength back.

We had absolutely nothing to wear. One day a Russian soldier came and told us that we could go to a warehouse not too far away. In it were clothes that we could take for ourselves. The warehouse was very large, filled from the floor to the ceiling with clothes. The Germans had looted things and stored them here. The Russians went from camp to camp, sending people here to get clothes. We didn't even know that there were so many camps around us full of hundreds upon hundreds of prisoners just like us.

When Lonia and I got to the warehouse we were astonished to see hundreds of people inside trying to get things. We saw people

laying almost on top of each other, grabbing whatever they could. In this atmosphere we tried to find a dress or skirt or blouse or coat but we just couldn't. It was too crowded. We made a decision to just take whatever we could find. When we returned to the barracks at the end of the day we sorted out our clothes and looked at them. We had mostly men's suits, jackets and pants. The women who could sew made skirts out of the pants. We did the same. We also exchanged things among ourselves. After a month we no longer looked like prisoners. We had a few pieces of clothing. They were our only possessions.

Being free brought back memories of my life in our house in Radom with Mother, Dad and my sisters. At night I would lie awake thinking that maybe I would return. Maybe I would find at least one of my sisters. If not, I would be all alone in this free world. That is why I decided to return to Radom and find some news about my family.

When we arrived in Radom some survivors were already there. I had no idea where I was going to stay or sleep that first night. I found out that my friend Shirley was already in Radom. We were so happy to see each other and to just be alive. I had a place to sleep the first night with Shirley. The next day we found out that there was a Jewish

committee in Radom that placed people in some vacant apartments. We were given a small room for four of us girls who had come to Radom together.

Here I was in Radom, walking the streets that I knew so well and wondering what to do next. Suddenly, I met my cousin Mordechai. He was wearing a Polish army uniform. I was astonished. we hugged and we cried. He had fled to Russia before the Germans arrived in Radom. From there he somehow enlisted in the Polish army. I was happy that maybe I would be together with my cousin. But Mordechai informed me that he had to move on. He was a soldier and had orders to follow. Before leaving, he gave me a picture of my mother. He had gone to City Hall to look for some pictures and identifications of our families. This is the only picture I have of my mother.

The Polish people were cruel to us. They had thought they had us all dead but here we were again. After wandering the streets for a few days, I gathered up the courage to go back to our old apartment. I walked to Rwanańska #5, into the courthouse looking for some of our neighbors or someone that I knew. Finally I walked over to our door and knocked on it. A woman came to the door, asking what I wanted. I

asked if she would allow me to look at our apartment. When I entered I became hysterical, crying uncontrollably. I saw our china closet. I saw our curtains on the windows. I saw many other things that had been in our home. I left very sad and with a heavy heart.

The next day I went to my grandmother's house. There was no vegetable garden and no orchard. I saw a tremendous hole. Very little remained of my grandmother's house. I did not want to go to her non-Jewish neighbors. It was too painful. I had no more hope that I would find anyone alive.

After a few weeks I learned that my cousin Rena, from whom I had been separated in Auschwitz was alive and living in Lodz. I went to see her. I had never been in Lodz before the war. We were so happy to see one another. I stayed with her for a week and then returned to Radom. While in Radom, two Jewish men were killed by Poles. Innocent victims. This murder put so much fear into us that we started thinking of leaving Radom forever. Where to?

The news came that we, the refugees, had to go back to Germany because that was where we got help from the U.S. U.N.R.A. In Radom I

supported myself by selling the things that I managed to get in the warehouse in Czechoslovakia.

My friend Lonia Ajzenberg found out that her husband Baruch was still alive but her son was dead. He lived in Garmish, Partenkirchen in Bavaria~~n~~ Germany. When I decided to go back to Germany and to Lonia Ajzenberg. Arriving on the station in Garmish Partenkirchen I met Sam Juli, whom I saw in Radom. He had asked me to go back with him to Germany and other Radomer men who were going back. I had declined the invitation.

When I saw him again at the station I was excited to see someone I knew. He lived in that town. I found out from him where the Ajzenbergs lived. He also told me that there were many Radomers in the town. I thought it was great to see some of the people I knew. Sam took me to a meeting place where I spotted my cousin, Abram Friedman. I had no idea that he was still alive. The conversation lasted late into the night when I realized that it was not right to go to Lonia. Abram and his friend Shmulik Migdalek offered me a place to sleep for the night.

Early in the morning Sam arrived to take me to Lonia and Baruch. The meeting was very emotional. I found out that Sam had become very friendly with Baruch in camp. Baruch had once offered Sam money for food since Sam worked in the kitchen. Sam told him to keep his money... he would give him whatever he could anyway. From that day on they became very good friends. Now, after the war, they lived in the same town. What a coincidence! I became friendly with Lonia and Sam with Baruch. Baruch had long conversations with me about Sam. He tried to bring us together. He said to me, "Paula, you can tell how good a person is by how he was during our horrible times. You will be very happy with him. He likes you very much."

I liked Sam also, but I was still looking for someone in my family. I heard that my cousin Henia had survived and she was in Bergen Belsen. This part of Germany was under British occupation. I decided to go there. Sam begged me not to go. It was a long journey and not that safe, but I was determined to go. I soon obtained the necessary travel papers and said good-bye.

I arrived in Bergen-Belsen happy to see my cousin Henia, her sister in law Solange and her mother-in-law. I was happy and thought

that I would stay with Henia. She agreed. Shortly after, I found out that Henia was going to Paris, where her brother Abram and sister Rachela survived the war. I could go too. Now I was frightened to go to Paris. I didn't know how I would manage in France. At the same time, I received a letter from Sam asking me to come back.

I went back to Sam. We were married on December 18, 1945 in Garmish Partenkirchen. My friend Millie, her father Joe, Lonia, Baruch, Abram, and Sam's brother Bernard attended the wedding. We moved into a one room apartment. Everything was there, even a telephone. We loved every minute of it. Sam taught me how to cook. He was my mother, father and sisters. He gave me the self-confidence which I was missing. He even tried to teach me German. I was very, very happy and not so lonely anymore.

Sam had a large family in the United States. They sent us the necessary paperwork for us to come to the U.S.A. On March 14th, 1947, after a fourteen day voyage, we finally saw the Statue of Liberty from our ship, the *Marine Flasher*. This was an unforgettable sight. I was pregnant and expecting my first child in two months. How wonderful that my baby would be born in the United States, and not in

Germany!

My Baby Boy was born on May 15, 1947. We named him after my father, Hershel; his middle name, David, was for Sam's father, Harold David.

I was now a mother -- very happy and also very sad. Where is my mother to show my baby to, to ask questions?

I was lucky again. My parents were looking out for me. In our house was my neighbor, Esther Golden, who had a two-year-old son named Jackie. She was my lucky star. Esther helped me with my baby. I was a new mother in a new country. We both learned how to speak English together.

Three years later, on October 24, 1950, my son Herb was born. I remember Sam saying, "Now I have to bring home two toys for my sons." We named Herb after our mothers: Sam's mother, Hena and my mother, Tzarna. Herb's middle name is Charles. They are two wonderful boys. I was being rewarded with great things, thank G-d.

Life in the United States was very good. I learned to speak and read English. I felt good and I really hoped that we were now in a better world, without anti-semitism. I brought religion into my house. We

brought up our sons with respect, tradition, a religion and an education. I did not forget where I came from. The teachings of my parents are still with me today.

Sam was a barber in Europe. He wished to get into something else, but that was not possible. He had to support a family. Sam worked in a barber shop for one year and saved up some money to buy a shop on the Lower East Side of New York for \$1,000. He was happy and that made me happy because I knew that he was a capable and independent man.

We lived in Brooklyn for six years. Our next move was to Jackson Heights, Queens, where Sam bought a new shop. Harold went to school and Herb couldn't wait to be in school.

In Jackson Heights we had many friends in the same building: Millie and Jack Werber and their sons ^{Matthew} Matthew and David, Eva and Charlie Korman. Sam's brother Bernard and Betty lived nearby. Our apartment had one bedroom, but I managed to entertain family and friends. We joined the Radomer Society, where we met all our other friends from Radom.

Sam worked hard, but he was always in pain. He had severe headaches and I worried a lot about his suffering. Nevertheless, Sam was very ambitious. He wanted me to have nice clothes; he said, "You deserve them--you suffered enough."

Our first vacation was in 1956, when we bought our first new car. Sam learned to drive it and we went to Florida. How marvelous! We stayed in an air-conditioned apartment and had a wonderful time. I often look at those pictures. When we returned, we bought the house on Melbourne Avenue in Flushing.

We celebrated Harold's Bar Mitzvah and three years later we celebrated Herb's Bar Mitzvah. Our children graduated high school and then Queens College. They were good boys. The times were very turbulent. The Vietnam War, which we were all so much against, was ever-present.

I really had everything: good children, a wonderful husband, a house, a car, beautiful clothes. I couldn't ask for more. Why was I so lucky? Why not my sisters? I felt guilty about it.

We contributed to United Jewish Appeal and bought Bonds for Israel. The State of Israel meant a great deal to us. We now had a

country of our own. There was not much more that I could do to remember my past history. I spoke to my children about our suffering in Europe. I wanted them to know so they could tell others, to educate people to make sure that things like the Holocaust should never happen again.

We visited Israel in 1969. We saw our cousin Menashe's family. We went to Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, etc. It was an unforgettable experience.

My only worry was Sam's headaches. We went to many doctors, but they really did not know how to help Sam. The only thing they did was prescribe pills. Sam had a scar on his forehead that he got from a fall when he was ten years old. The doctor thought this was the cause of his headaches.

Harold met a beautiful girl, Harriet Bauch. I loved to see a girl in our house. We were very happy when the children came one day to tell us that they were engaged to be married. I made three parties in our house to celebrate their engagement. Harold was now enrolled as a graduate student at Brown University.

After Herb graduated from college, he left on a trip to Europe. He went to see Dachau, the death camp where Sam was interned. Then he went to see the place where Sam and I were married, ^{my}Garnish, Partenkirchen in Germany. That was where we lived before coming to the United States. I felt good about Herb's trip because it meant that he remembered about our past and wanted to see for himself the places where the atrocities were committed against us.

From Europe, Herb went to Israel, where he met Menashe's family.

Harold and Harriet were married on March 8, 1970 with two hundred guests attending. We loved our daughter-in-law. She was a sweet, good person. We now had a married son. Their first apartment was in Providence, Rhode Island, not far from Brown University. Since Harold's major was Archeology, he had to do field work in Israel. For the next three years, Harold and Harriet lived in Israel doing archaeological work and preparing for his doctorate. During that time we visited them in Israel. What wonderful memories!

Herb went to Colgate University for graduate work. He tried teaching, but this was not too interesting for him.

When Harold and Harriet came back from Israel, Harriet got pregnant. They wanted a family. On July 8, 1974, Eric was born. How wonderful it was to be grandparents!

Sam's wish finally came true when he sold the barber shop and bought a small tobacco shop in a building at 225 W. 34th St. in Manhattan. This was something entirely new, but very exciting. I was now able to help Sam. We worked together; he was the boss and I was the helper. I loved every minute of it. People used to wonder at how well we got along during work and after work.

When my sons were able to, they took over the store and made it possible for us to take a vacation. Our last store was on 39th Street and Second Avenue. Herb agreed to help in this store. He worked with us for two years.

Because Sam's headaches were getting worse, the decision was made to sell the store. Sam~~e~~ would retire. He would not have any pressure. We thought that would help. This turned out to be a very good decision. Sam was able to relax; he didn't have to get up at 6:00 A.M. He felt much better.

eat or sleep. Herb stayed with me for many months. He shopped and cooked and did all he could to help me alone in this house. Maybe I should sell the house, maybe to go some place. I was waiting for Sam to come back.

Harold took me to work the first day like a child and waited for me. They wanted me to function again. They suffered silently. Every week end Herb and I went to visit Harold, Harriet and Eric. Seeing 2-1/2 year old Eric made me forget about my tragedy.

After many months Herb made a decision not to go back to Israel. We all hugged and kissed him, thanking him for his decision. We wanted so much to be together.

Herb made a life for himself in the business world. He worked in the Insurance business and lived in Manhattan. I continued working in Lord & Taylor, but I worked longer hours. I also volunteered to work as the Secretary for the Radomer Society to fill my lonely hours.

I visited my cousin, Rena Herman, in Los Angeles. They were all good to me. The following year I went to Paris to be with my cousins, Henia and Sevek. I missed Sam all the time. I went during the winter months to Bernard and Betty in Florida. I always wanted to be with

people. I could not get used to being alone. My friends were very helpful. I shall not forget all those that did help. On one visit to Florida, I met Jack Cohen, who I married on October 25, 1981. Jack is a good man. Although I am not alone anymore, my life/as never been the same.

I visit Sam's grave often. I tell him about our children's progress and about our grandchildren. I only hope he can hear me.

On Friday evening when I light the Sabbath candles, I speak to my mother and father and my three sisters. I ask them for forgiveness that I could not save them. I also ask Sam for forgiveness for marrying another man.

Sam fulfilled all my needs. He was considerate, supportive and loving. He was a very good father who loved his sons.

I always felt guilty that I was the only one of my family to live. Why? I really don't know how I survived. I don't consider myself a hero. I really didn't do much to survive; I only followed orders. Maybe I was stronger than those who died in the camps. Had the war continued a little longer, perhaps there would have been no survivors.

I always think about how my parents and sisters died. Did they make it to Treblinka or were they killed during chase or the travel. My father was so frail and my poor mother silently always hoped for a better tomorrow, my younger sisters who hugged and kissed me and clung to me when I said good-bye to them . . .

During my many sleepless nights, those are the pictures in front of my eyes. In a way I welcome them; they sometimes look so real . . .

PJC
August, 1997

